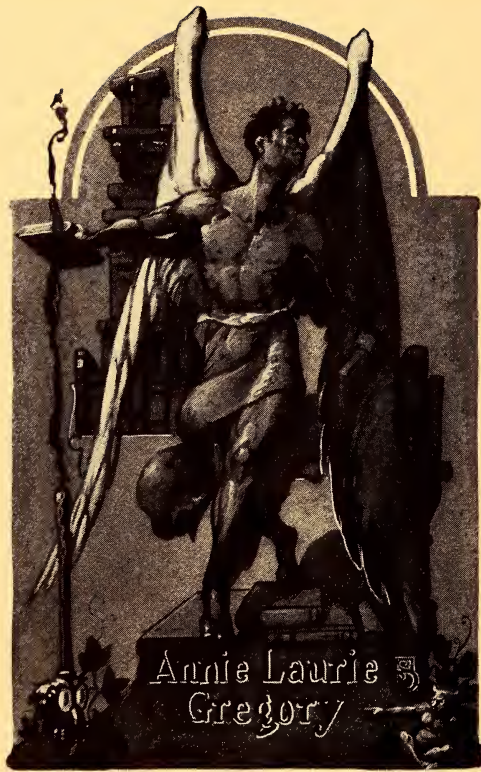


**Major
Robert Anderson
and
Fort Sumter
1861**

75
NF

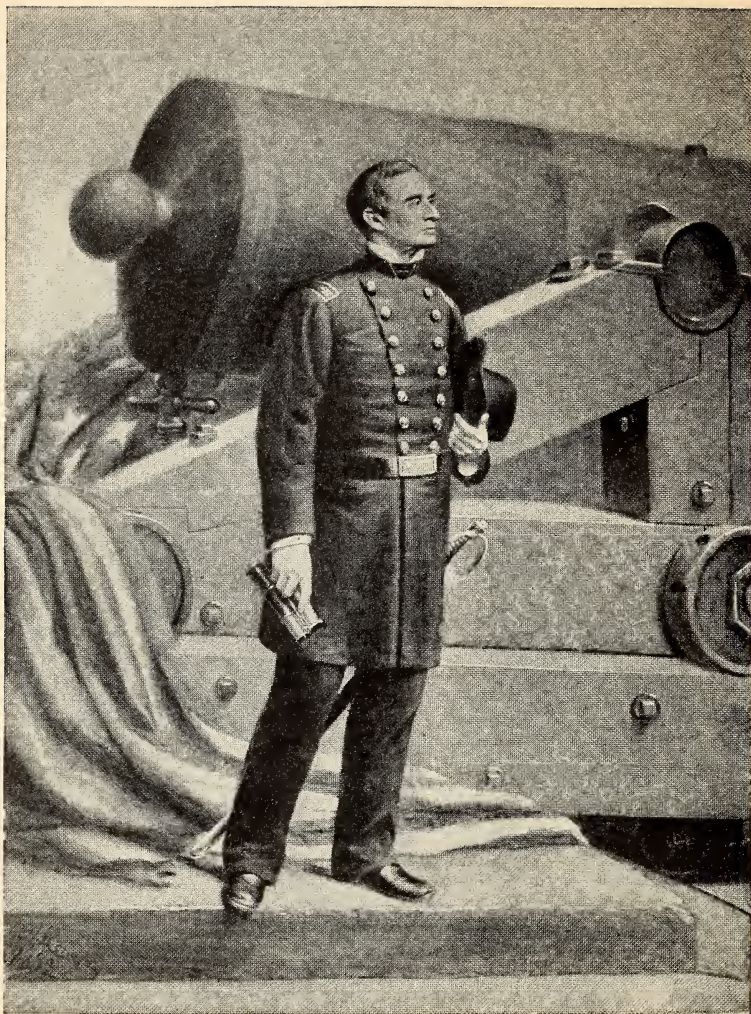


Bertrand Smith
Acres of 'Rocks'
140 Pacific Ave.
Long Beach 2, Calif.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2012 with funding from

The Institute of Museum and Library Services through an Indiana State Library LSTA Grant



Most sincerely
yours
Wm. Anderson

Major Robert Anderson
and
Fort Sumter
1861

By
Eba Anderson Lawton

The Knickerbocker Press
New York
1911

COPYRIGHT, 1911
BY
EBA ANDERSON LAWTON

The Knickerbocker Press, New York

The Defence of Fort Sumter—a Record of the Actual History of the Events

ON this, the fiftieth anniversary of the Defence of Fort Sumter by Major Robert Anderson, I am writing to present for the veterans who have memory of the events and for the generation which has grown up since the War, a correct narrative of what actually happened and to correct various mis-statements and misapprehensions which have, during the past half century, been permitted to confuse the history.

If the question were to-day asked who was General Anderson, the answer from many citizens of this younger generation might easily be "I never heard of him." Others would say: "He was in command of Fort Sumter; he surrendered the Fort."

The services of this American patriot and

all that he suffered for the cause of his idolized country and in the fulfilment of his duty to the Government, his dignified silence under ingratitude and lack of appreciation, his modesty in leaving credit to be given to others for work planned and carried out by himself, his self-effacement during the days of the bombardment and during the later long months of the War;—these are to be recorded in the full Memoirs, which will present the Life of Robert Anderson told in his diary and letters, and which is shortly to be published by G. P. Putnam's Sons of New York and London. The present monograph has to do simply with the record of Anderson's service in Fort Moultrie and Fort Sumter and with the replacing of the flag over Sumter in April, 1865.

It is time that Americans generally, and particularly the young people of the present generation, should know something about the real character and service of this patriot and earnest Christian.

At the time Major Anderson, who had just been promoted to the First Artillery, was placed in command at Fort Moultrie, he had personal acquaintance with none of the officers at Moultrie. He found the Fort in a dilapidated condition. The garrison was absurdly small and all the munitions were in a condition of chaos. He realized that the people of Charleston were highly excited and that the authority of the United States was likely to be assailed. Anderson at once made a full report to Washington and demanded immediate reinforcements.

On the 11th of December, Major Anderson received instructions brought to him by Major Buell, which instructions were at once committed to writing. On Sunday, the 23d, a sealed letter was handed to him by Major Withers, Assistant Adjutant-General, which letter had been written by Floyd, Secretary of War. The letter is reproduced in facsimile with this.

The readers of to-day will realize the in-

famy of the instructions given to Major Anderson by the official in authority, the Secretary of War. The public orders were to defend the Fort to the last extremity. The secret "confidential" order instructed the Major to give up the Fort without a fight. It is an evidence of the loyal reticence of the man that he kept this secret to himself throughout his life.

If Major Anderson had made public that confidential order, the whole condition of affairs might have been changed.

It is probable that the White House would have been mobbed and Buchanan, the weak-kneed President, and Floyd and the other men in authority, who were traitors to their oath, would have been justly called to account.

Major Anderson had, from his childhood, been brought up with a reverence and love not only for his country, but for his Government. He had a full heritage of loyal patriotism, for his father had been an officer in

famy of the instructions given to Major Anderson by the official in authority, the Secretary of War. The public orders were to defend the Fort to the last extremity. The secret "confidential" order instructed the Major to give up the Fort without a fight. It is an evidence of the loyal reticence of the man that he kept this secret to himself throughout his life.

If Major Anderson had made public that confidential order, the whole condition of affairs might have been changed.

It is probable that the White House would have been mobbed and Buchanan, the weak-kneed President, and Floyd and the other men in authority, who were traitors to their oath, would have been justly called to account.

Father died in 1871. This letter was published by my cousin, Captain E. L. Anderson, in *Harper's Weekly*, June 10, 1876, in first Vol. "War of the Rebellion," about ten years after the close of the War, and in Vol. III. Rhodes' "History of the United States," published 1895.

EBA ANDERSON LAWTON.

Washington's army and his mother was a cousin of Chief Justice Marshall. It was his loyalty to the Government that kept him from allowing anything to be known of this infamous order, because he realized that any such knowledge could only have brought the Government into contempt. No one but his Father in Heaven knew of this dastardly attempt that had been made to brand him in the eyes of the world as a traitor to his trust and to the Government, which would, of course, have denounced him had he obeyed the confidential order.

In this emergency, Anderson turned to God in prayer, and under the divine guidance he was able to escape the snare that had been set for him.

On the 26th of December, 1860, he abandoned Fort Moultrie and moved his force to Fort Sumter, and not until the order was given to man the boats did even his officers know of his intention. At Sumter, the flag was raised with prayer.

Promptly from Washington came a telegram, which with answer is presented below:

RECEIVED AT CHARLESTON, DEC. 27, 1860, AT 2 O'CLOCK

P. M. BY TELEGRAPH FROM WASHINGTON, 27TH,
TO MAJ. R. ANDERSON, U. S. A.

FORT MOULTRIE.

"Intelligence has reached here this morning that you have abandoned Fort Moultrie, spiked your guns, burnt the carriages, and gone to Fort Sumter. It is not believed, because there is no order for any such movement. Explain the meaning of this report.

"J. B. FLOYD,

"Sec'y of War."

Answer: "The telegram is correct. I abandoned Fort Moultrie because I was certain that, if attacked, my men must have been sacrificed and the command of the harbor lost. I spiked the guns and destroyed the carriages to keep the guns from being used against us.

K. & H. Moultrie Co
Charleston, Dec. 23, 1860
By Major Moultrie and Sub.

Dear Lieutenant

Washington 21. Dec. 1860

Major Anderson 1. Artillery

Commanding ^{by} Fort Moultrie S.C.

Sir

In the verbal instructions
communicated to you by Major Bull you
are directed to hold possession of the Fort, in
the harbor of Charleston and if attacked
to defend yourself to the last extremity
Under these instructions you might ~~sup-~~
^{infer} ~~from~~ that you are required to make a
vain and useless sacrifice of your own
life and the lives of the men under
your command upon a mere point of
honor. This is far from the Residents'
intention. You are to exercise a sound
military discretion on this subject.
It is neither expected nor desired that

expose your own life or that
that you should ~~sacrifice the lives~~ of your
men in a hopeless conflict in defence
of these Ports. If they are invested or attacked
by a force so superior that resistance
would in your judgment be a useless
waste of life it will be your duty to
yield to necessity and make the
best terms in your power. This will
be the conduct of an honorable brave
and humane Officer and you will
be fully justified in such action.

These orders are strictly confi-
dential and not to be communicated
even to the Officers under your Command
without a clear necessity.

Very respectfully

Wm B Floyd
Secy of War

If attacked, the garrison would never have surrendered without a fight.

“ ROBERT ANDERSON,

“ *Major 1st Arty. Comdg.*

“ FORT SUMTER, S. C.,

“ 4 P. M., Dec. 27, '60.”

On the back of the telegram is written by Major Anderson the rough draft of his reply. It is interesting to note, in connection with Floyd's order, Anderson's answer that “the garrison would never have surrendered without a fight.” This is the officer who, by some, was stigmatized as “not loyal to the Union.” There are few parallel cases in history. Many men have died for their country, but few have been so devoted in their loyalty as to be prepared, even at the risk of loss of reputation, to protect their government from contempt. The flag-staff at Fort Moultrie, where Jasper in the old days had raised the national flag, was cut down by the order of Major Anderson who said, “No other flag

but the Stars and Stripes shall ever float from that staff."

In one of the obituary notices that came into print after Anderson's death, an officer raises the claim that *he* had advised Anderson to transfer his force from Moultrie to Sumter. A letter from this same officer will be given in the forthcoming Memoir, and the world will be able to judge between the words that were given before and those written after the death of Major Anderson.

Further evidence in regard to the responsibility for the transfer is given in the letter here cited from Major Anderson to his wife:

"FORT SUMTER, S. C.,

"8 P. M., Dec. 26, 1860.

"Thanks be to God. I give them with my whole heart for His having given me the will, and shewn me the way to bring my command to this Fort. I can now breathe freely. The whole force of S. Carolina would not venture to attack us. Our crossing was accom-

plished between six and eight o'clock. I am satisfied that there was no suspicion of what we were going to do. I have no doubt that the news of what I have done will be telegraphed to New York this night. We saw signal rockets thrown up all around just as our last boat came over. I have not time to write more—as I must make my report to the Ad. Genl. . . . Praise be to God for His merciful kindness to us. I think that the whole country North and South should thank Him for this step.”

During weary months, with no instructions, or no comprehensible instructions, from the Government, Anderson was left to his own responsibility. The harbor was closed, so that no reinforcements could reach him. Provisions from Charleston were stopped and batteries were erected around the doomed fort. Anderson was, as he pitifully expressed it, like “a sheep tied watching the butcher sharpening a knife to cut his throat.” By orders subse-

quently received, he had been forbidden to open fire unless Fort Sumter was actually attacked.

A devoted friend wrote Major Anderson that he had heard from Colonel Lamon—who had been sent from Washington to report on the condition of affairs,—that he intended to blow up the Fort. I quote part of his answer:

“I do not, of course, know what terms Colonel Lamon used in repeating the declaration referred to. So great was the excitement in S. Carolina against this command, when I came into this Fort, and for weeks afterwards, that I was satisfied, that, if attacked, and overcome, not a soul would have been left alive, and I did, during that time, say, more than once, that, rather than let my garrison suffer that fate, I would blow up the Fort as they entered the walls, and all who might be in it. I told Colonel Lamon that I had made that remark.

“Cut off from all intercourse with my Government, I have been compelled to act according to the dictates of my own judgment, and, had the contingency referred to, arisen, I

should, after prayerfully appealing to God, to teach me my duty, have cheerfully and promptly performed it.

“ You have not time, my dear General, to read, nor have I time to detail, the delicate and important points which have arisen since I have been in this harbour. I have tried to perform all my duty, and I trust that I have, by the blessing of God, so acted, that the most searching investigation shall show that I have done nothing amiss.

“ I must say that I think the Gov. has left me too much to myself—has not given me instructions, even when I have asked for them—and that responsibilities of a higher and more delicate character have devolved upon me than was proper—and I frankly say that such is the fact at this present moment.

“ Were it not for my humble, but firm reliance upon God, my heart would have no spring, no hope—but I know that He will, in His own time, dispel the clouds which now hang over our Country, and give us Light.”

Offers came from the Confederate authorities to this commander, seemingly abandoned by his Government, which allowed him to withdraw his garrison, taking with him all the property, public and private, and saluting his flag. The promise was given that the garrison would be sent to any point of the United States that Anderson might select. This offer was respectfully declined. Anderson stood undaunted, firm in his faith that God would show the way.

On the morning of the 12th of April, just fifty years ago, the rebel force, about ten thousand strong, opened fire upon the devoted garrison, which comprised in all, officers, non-commissioned officers, privates, and the band, some sixty men.

After a glorious resistance, the Fort was evacuated; the terms of evacuation being the same that had been offered and refused a few days before. "That flag which has been raised with prayer, shall never be lowered except with honor."

The rebels lined their batteries and cheered the garrison as the men left the Fort and passed out to the fleet beyond the bar. The garrison reached New York on the ~~20th~~ 18th of April, 1861.

The enthusiasm was unbounded. The whole Country realized that the honor of the Nation had been fully vindicated by his loyalty.

Even those who later, either through jealousy or personal enmity, tried to belittle him, joined in the universal praise. I quote from a letter of one of his officers to him at this time: "The whole Country looks to you with a depth of affection which has not had its parallel since the days of Washington."

These ~~honeyed~~ words were from the same officer who, after Major Anderson's lips were sealed in death, dared to say that his Commander was not a Union man.

In answer to the false statement that Anderson had surrendered the fort, I give a copy of his despatch to the Government of April 18th:

“ STEAMSHIP ‘ BALTIC ’ OFF SANDY HOOK,
 “ April 18, 1861. 10:30 A.M., via New York.

“ Having defended Fort Sumter for thirty-four hours, until the quarters were entirely burned, the main gates destroyed by fire, the gorge walls seriously impaired, the magazine surrounded by flames, and its door closed from the effects of the heat, four barrels and three cartridges of powder only being available, and no provisions remaining but pork, I accepted terms of evacuation offered by General Beauregard (being the same offered by him on the 11th instant, prior to the commencement of hostilities) and marched out of the Fort on Sunday afternoon, the 14th instant, with colors flying and drums beating, bringing away company and private property, and saluting my flag with fifty guns.

“ ROBERT ANDERSON,

“ *Major First Artillery,*

“ HON. SIMON CAMERON,

“ *Secretary of War,*

“ Washington, D. C.”

War Department

Washington City

March 28

1865

General

I have the pleasure of communicating to you the enclosed order of the President directing the Flag of the United States to be raised and planted upon the ruins of Fort Sumter by your hands, on the 14th day of April next, the fourth anniversary of the evacuation of that post by the United States forces under your command. I am happy to be the medium of transmitting this high and just tribute to the fortitude, gallantry & patriotism displayed by you in occupying and holding Fort Sumter - qualities that distinguish you as a brave and patriotic soldier, as well as a Christian officer and gentleman. With great regard I am your friend and obedient servant.

Edwin M. Stanton
Secretary of War

Brevet Major General Robert Anderson

His health was completely shattered—from the fearful responsibility resting upon him for so many months, acting upon a constitution enfeebled from want of food and sleep. But when the Legislature of Kentucky notified him through the President that he was the only Union officer whom the State would allow to raise troops within her territory, he answered the call. He did not care or think of himself, his whole heart and soul were absorbed in his determination to save his State “from the sin of secession,” and he accomplished the task. After organizing the Army of the Cumberland, and leaving his old Lieutenants Thomas and Sherman to go on with the work—then and not until then was he forced to ask to be relieved. He was never after that date on active service. But what a glorious war record! He saved his country’s honor in Charleston Harbor, and kept old Kentucky a Union State.

I want also to emphasize with the readers of this generation certain things that were

not fully understood by men whose loyalty was of a less exalted type than that which characterized Anderson. He was born in Kentucky, but the early influences that surrounded him were all in favor of the support of the Union. Anderson knew no North and no South. When still young he left home for West Point, and from the time of his entry into the army to the close of his service his duties had carried him into nearly every part of the United States.

He was nothing of a politician. He never voted in his life, having an old-fashioned idea that a soldier owed his allegiance to the Government no matter of what party, and that therefore he had no business to have any political bias.

His feeling about the duty of a soldier can be well illustrated by his remarks to an officer from the South, who said that while he loved the flag, he loved his State better, and who had convinced himself that his duty lay with his State. Major Ander-

son's reply was: "The selection of the place in which we were born was not an act of our own volition; but when we took the oath of allegiance to our Government, it was an act of our manhood, and that oath we cannot break."

An expression has been quoted by some who could not understand his absolute devotion to the cause of the Union. The words were: "My heart is not in this war." I quote what my father often said and what he felt from his very heart. His love was for the whole country.

"Our Southern brethren have done grievously wrong, they have rebelled and have attacked their father's house and their loyal brothers. They must be punished and brought back, but this necessity breaks my heart." Is this loyalty or treason?

On the 14th of April, 1865, the original flag which had been taken down by Major Anderson was again raised by him over the ruins of Fort Sumter. I give a facsimile of

the order for the raising. That flag now rests in a glass case in the office of the Secretary of War in Washington with this inscription:

“ This flag floated over Fort Sumter, South Carolina, during the bombardment April 12th and 13th, 1861, and upon the evacuation of the fort, April 14th, 1861, was saluted and lowered by Major Robert Anderson, First U. S. Artillery, Commanding. On April 14th, 1865, Brevet Major-General Anderson raised this same flag and planted it upon the ruins of Fort Sumter, when it was saluted by one hundred guns and by a National salute from every fort and battery that fired upon Fort Sumter.”

To all children of the present day, I commit this brief sketch of the services rendered by Major Anderson to his country during the bombardment of Fort Sumter. Let his example of devotion as a Christian, as a soldier, and as a patriot be for you a guide and incentive. Never forget that this Christian

soldier loved his country next to his God. Take for your watchword the words of Mr. Crittenden in his farewell address to the Senate:

“Long after Fort Sumter shall have crumbled away, brightly will stand forth the example of Anderson as that of a soldier true to his standard, and of an American true to his country.”

71.2009.084.09283

